



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Report to the City Council

DATE ISSUED: July 29, 2016 REPORT NO.: 16-071
ATTENTION: Honorable Members of the City Council
SUBJECT: Balboa Park Plaza de Panama Project
REFERENCE: Fiscal Year 2017 CIP Budget - Balboa Park Plaza de Panama Project

REQUESTED ACTION:

Approve necessary actions to review and finalize construction documents for the previously Council-approved Balboa Park Plaza de Panama Project (Project) that will enhance pedestrian spaces in the Plaza de Panama, Plaza de California, West El Prado, the Esplanade (between the Plaza de Panama and the Organ Pavilion), and the Pan American Promenade (Pan American Road East). The Project will also include a new parking structure with a 2.2 acre rooftop park, improved accessible parking at the Alcazar Parking Lot, and a bypass bridge and road to divert vehicular traffic away from the pedestrian core of the park. Approved actions will allow for Project construction documents to be prepared consistent with the previously certified Environmental Impact Report and changes in state building regulations. Project costs will be refined to reflect costs associated with any regulatory changes. This effort will be funded through the Plaza de Panama Committee (Committee) as originally contemplated with the previously Council-approved Plaza de Panama Improvement Agreement (Document No. RR – 307558). The approval of City funds will give City staff the ability to work collaboratively with the Committee and provide appropriate oversight to ensure compliance with all applicable regulations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

1. Amend the Fiscal Year 2017 Capital Improvement Budget (CIP) to create the Balboa Park Plaza de Panama Project CIP.
2. Authorize the Chief Financial Officer to transfer \$352,214.26 to Fund 200215 Unap. Res-Balboa Park CIP from the following funds for the purpose of funding City expenditures during the process of reviewing and finalizing construction documents:
 - \$201,422.94 from Fund 200213 Mission Bay Park/Balboa Park
 - \$81,765.68 from Fund 200469 Balboa Park Concessionaire
 - \$69,025.64 from Fund 200452 Balboa Park Trust; and
3. Authorize the Chief Financial Officer to add CIP L-17002, Balboa Park Plaza de Panama Project to the Capital Improvements Program; and

4. Authorize the Chief Financial Officer to increase the Capital Improvements Program Budget in CIP L-17002, Balboa Park Plaza de Panama Project and to appropriate and expend an amount not to exceed \$1.0 million dollars for the purpose of reviewing and finalizing construction documents and revising Project construction costs, of which up to \$602,576.04 from Fund 200215 Unap. Res-Balboa Park CIP and up to \$397,423.96 from Fund 400000 Capital Outlay-Sales Tax.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF ITEM BACKGROUND:

Balboa Park is located in the heart of San Diego and is one of the City's largest developed parks at 1,172 acres and is host to numerous passive and active recreational activities, cultural institutions, and special events such as December Nights, Earth Fair, San Diego LGBT Pride and countless others. More than 12 million visitors come to Balboa Park each year to enjoy the diversity of activities the park has to offer.

Development, maintenance and management of Balboa Park are governed by the Balboa Park Master Plan (BPMP), the Central Mesa Precise Plan (CMPP), the East Mesa Precise Plan (EMPP) and subsequent amendments to these documents. The BPMP was adopted by City Council on July 25, 1989 (Resolution No: R-274090) and the CMPP was adopted by City Council on October 20, 1992 (Resolution R-280920). The Balboa Park Masterplan speaks to the entirety of Balboa Park. The CMPP provides development guidelines for the central portion of the park.

On July 9, 2012, the City Council voted to approve amendments of the BPMP and CMPP to incorporate the proposed Project (Resolution R-307555) after an extensive public input process. See Attachment 1 (Report to City Council, June 19, 2012, No. 12-080). At the same time the City Council certified the Environmental Impact Report (Project No. 233958/SCH No. 2011031074;R-307554) and approved Site Development Permit No. 837848 for the Project (R-307556).

The Project schedule was delayed by a legal challenge, however, the Court of Appeals ruled that the Project approvals were properly granted and the California Supreme Court declined to hear further appeals.

Project Objectives

The underlying purpose of the Project is to restore pedestrian and park uses to the Central Mesa and alleviate pedestrian/vehicular conflicts. To achieve this goal, six primary objectives were envisioned:

- Remove vehicles from the Plaza de Panama, El Prado, Plaza de California, the Mall (also called the Esplanade), and Pan American Road East (also called the Pan American Promenade) while maintaining public and proximate vehicular access to the institutions which are vital to the park's success and longevity.
- Restore pedestrian and park uses to El Prado, Plaza de Panama, Plaza de California, the Mall, and re-create the California Garden behind the Organ Pavilion.
- Improve access to the Central Mesa through the provision of additional parking, while maintaining convenient drop-off, disabled access, valet parking, and a new tram service with the potential for future expansion.
- Improve the pedestrian link between the Central Mesa's two cultural cores: El Prado and the Palisades.
- Implement a funding plan including bonds that provide for construction of a paid parking structure intended to fund the structure's operation and maintenance, tram operations, and the debt service on the structure only.

- Complete all work prior to January 2015 for the 1915 Panama-California Exposition centennial celebration.

Due to the delay caused by litigation, the last objective can no longer be met, and the tram is currently being operated. Once staff has an updated cost estimate, a revised financing plan will be developed and brought to City Council for final approval in the Fall of 2016.

Project Overview

The various components of the project are listed below and a detailed description of each component is included.

1. Plaza de Panama
2. El Prado and Plaza de California
3. Centennial Bridge and Centennial Road
4. Alcazar Parking Lot
5. The Esplanade and Pan American Promenade
6. Parking Structure, Roof-top Park, Tram and Arizona Street Landfill

Presently, vehicles entering the Central Mesa of Balboa Park from the west travel across the Cabrillo Bridge through the Plaza de California. Traffic flows along El Prado and into the Plaza de Panama. Vehicles then turn south on Pan American Road toward the Palisades Area and Presidents Way. Traffic is two-way, and vehicles may exit the park to the west in the same manner.

One of the primary goals of the project is to remove vehicular access from the core of the park. To achieve this goal, a new bypass bridge, "Centennial Bridge," would connect the eastern end of the Cabrillo Bridge to the western side of the Alcazar parking lot. At that point a new bypass road, "Centennial Road," would continue to the south where vehicles can access a new parking structure located beneath the current Organ Pavilion parking lot or continue to Presidents Way. Presidents Way would provide access the Palisades area or exit to Park Boulevard.

Description of Project Components

Plaza de Panama

Vehicle circulation would be removed from the Plaza de Panama, and the Plaza would be redesigned with enhanced paving, landscaping, movable tables and chairs, 1915 replica light standards, and other amenities, such as the shallow reflecting pools that can be turned off to accommodate large special events. The Plaza would incorporate shade trees along the eastern and western sides, with the central portion of the Plaza remaining mostly open for flexibility. The existing fountain located in the center of the Plaza would be retained. Landscaping around the Plaza would be returned to its original 1915 design.

Plaza de California and El Prado

The Plaza de California is a small plaza encircled by the California Building (Museum of Man). This Plaza was historically used as a pedestrian square during the Expositions. Vehicle circulation would be removed from the Plaza de California and the Plaza would be redesigned with enhanced paving, accent trees, and movable tables and chairs. El Prado is the primary east-west road that runs through the Central Mesa from Sixth Avenue to the Plaza de Balboa. Vehicular traffic would be removed from El Prado between

the Cabrillo Bridge and the Plaza de Panama. The space would be redesigned with enhanced paving, formal street trees, replica 1915 light standards and benches.

Centennial Bridge and Centennial Road

The Centennial Bridge and Centennial Road are proposed to reconfigure vehicular circulation and enable the core of the Park to be returned to pedestrian use. The Centennial Bridge would be approximately 405 feet long, connecting the Cabrillo Bridge to the Alcazar parking lot. Centennial Road would connect the Alcazar parking lot to the new Organ Pavilion parking structure and continue on to Presidents Way. Centennial Road would slope down from the Alcazar parking lot and pass beneath Pan American Promenade. The existing raised wood pedestrian path that connects the Alcazar parking lot with the Organ Pavilion would be realigned and extend to the International Cottages area.

Alcazar Parking Lot

The Alcazar parking lot would be reconfigured to provide drop-off, valet, and accessible parking. The parking lot would be reconfigured to include a total of 32 accessible parking spaces as well as a passenger drop-off area adjacent to the Alcazar Garden. Approximately 18 valet staging spaces would be located at the southeastern corner of the parking lot. A small valet booth and pergola structure would be located along the eastern edge of the parking lot. A raised pedestrian bridge and walkway along the south side of the House of Charm/Mingei Museum would be constructed, providing direct access from the Alcazar parking lot to the Plaza de Panama. Access to Palm Canyon and the Cabrillo Canyon archery range would be maintained.

The Esplanade and Pan American Promenade

Pan American Road, also known as the Mall or Esplanade, connects the Plaza de Panama to the Organ Pavilion. Pan American Road East, also known as Pan American Promenade, connects the Organ Pavilion to the Palisades area at Presidents Way. With vehicular circulation rerouted to Centennial Road, the Esplanade and Pan American Promenade would be redesigned to provide a tram and pedestrian route with enhanced paving, landscaping, benches and replica 1915 light standards.

Organ Pavilion Parking Structure, Roof-top Park, Tram and Arizona Street Landfill

The existing Organ Pavilion surface parking lot located southwest of the Spreckels Organ Pavilion would be removed and a new underground parking structure would be constructed with approximately 797 parking spaces on three levels, with a 2.2-acre roof-top park. This would result in a net gain of approximately 260 parking spaces for the Central Mesa. A deck over Centennial Road would provide pedestrian and tram access to the Organ Pavilion and northward to the Esplanade. Vehicle access to and from the new structure would be provided from two points of entry on the east side of the structure from Centennial Road. Park visitors arriving from both the west (via the Cabrillo Bridge) and the east (via Presidents Way) would be able to access the structure.

A new roof-top park would be constructed atop the parking structure and include the re-created "California Garden" and an open lawn. The roof-top park would have a central elevator courtyard with a large open air trellised pavilion around it. A new public restroom approximately would be located on the northeast corner of the roof-top park to replace the 1990s restroom being removed near the International Cottages. A second small restroom would be provided adjacent to the new visitor center at the southwest corner. Tram stops would be located adjacent to the central elevator core and the visitor center.

Other Project Components

Pedestrian Circulation

Pedestrians would still be able to cross the Cabrillo Bridge and enter the Park through the Plaza de California as they do now. The newly pedestrianized El Prado would provide improved access to the Plaza de Panama; from there, pedestrians could proceed south along the Esplanade to the Organ Pavilion and Palisades area. For those visitors being dropped off at the Alcazar parking lot, pedestrian access to El Prado would be either north through the Alcazar Garden or east via a newly constructed raised pedestrian walkway proposed as part of this project.

Pan America Promenade would be for pedestrian and tram-only circulation. A grade-separated pedestrian deck would span Centennial Road and connect to the Esplanade. The project would extend the Palm Canyon raised wood bridge to the International Cottages.

Bicycle Circulation

Bicycle use would be permitted within the core of the Park; however, no dedicated bicycle routes would be provided pursuant to the circulation objectives and policies of the CMPP. Bicycle circulation would also be allowed along Centennial Bridge and Centennial Road similar to automobiles. Bicycle storage facilities would be located within the Organ Pavilion parking structure and on the roof-top park.

Parking Changes

Parking has already been removed from the Plaza de Panama; however, drop-off locations still remain. The drop-off function as well as valet service would be relocated to a reconstructed Alcazar Lot. The Alcazar Lot would be reconstructed to accommodate accessible parking only, as well as drop-off and valet. As noted above, the Organ Pavilion surface parking lot would be removed, and a new below-grade parking structure would be located in its place.

Project Costs and Next Steps

The requested actions before the City Council will allow City staff to work collaboratively with the Committee to review and finalize construction documents as well as update Project construction costs. The Committee has agreed to privately finance this initial effort as originally contemplated in the Council-approved Plaza de Panama Improvement Agreement. The \$1 million of City funds will be available for City staff to work collaboratively with the Committee and provide oversight to ensure compliance with all local regulations and guidance on Park and Recreation Department's operational needs. Staff will charge time to the Project and any remaining funds will be applied towards construction after further Council action.

Since the technical work to refine construction costs has not been completed, it is too early to have a reliable Project cost estimate. However, preliminarily, it is anticipated Project costs could be as high as \$70-\$75 million due to prevailing wage requirements, changes in storm water regulations and a different bidding environment from 2012. Additionally, other site conditions have been modified, including the temporary improvements to the Plaza de Panama and the Alcazar parking lot, which will need to be reviewed and incorporated into the final construction documents. Once staff has an updated cost estimate, a revised financing plan will be developed and brought to City Council for final approval in the Fall of

2016. The City's contribution will be primarily funded with parking revenues and will not exceed \$45 million. The remainder will be funded with private philanthropy.

CITY STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL(S)/OBJECTIVE(S):

Goal 2: Work in Partnership with all of our communities to achieve safe and livable neighborhoods

Objective 3: Invest in Infrastructure

FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Up to \$1 million in CIP expenditures are proposed with this City Council action - \$352,214.26 from a variety of funds that have been established over the past 25 years to support Balboa Park will be transferred to Fund 200215 Unap. Res-Balboa Park CIP for the purpose of this project as detailed below:

- \$201,422.94 from Fund 200213 Mission Bay Park/Balboa Park
- \$81,765.68 from Fund 200469 Balboa Park Concessionaire
- \$69,025.64 from Fund 200452 Balboa Park Trust

In addition, \$250,361.78 in fund balance for Fund 200215 Unap. Res-Balboa Park CIP and \$397,423.96 in fund balance from Fund 400000 Capital Outlay-Sales Tax is available to be appropriated for this project.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL and/or COMMITTEE ACTIONS:

On July 9, 2012, the City Council voted to approve amendments of the BPMP and CMPP to incorporate the proposed project (Resolution R-307555) after an extensive public input process, which is outlined in detail in Attachment 1 (Report to City Council, June 19, 2012, No. 12-080). The Environmental Impact Report was certified by the City Council (Project No. 233958/SCH No. 2011031074; R-307554) and Site Development Permit No. 837848 was approved (R-307556) and the Plaza de Panama Improvement Agreement (Document No. RR-307558) was approved.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH EFFORTS:

This Project received a tremendous amount of community participation and input during the preparation of plan amendments and the Environmental Impact Report. The extent of community participation is further described in Attachment 1 (Report to City Council, June 19, 2012, No. 12-080).

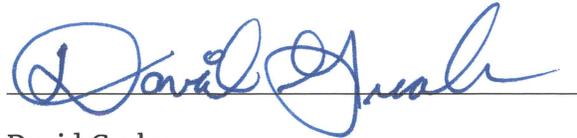
KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND PROJECTED IMPACTS:

Balboa Park is one of the largest parks within the City's park system and is considered by many as the "crown jewel" of the system. Due to the park's central location, diverse recreational amenities, and historical significance it is visited by more than 14 million visitors each year and is considered a favorite local destination by city and county residents.

The projected impacts are described extensively throughout the Report to City Council (Attachment 1) and the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) prepared for the Project.



Herman D. Parker
Park and Recreation Director



David Graham
Deputy Chief/Chief Operating Officer

Attachment(s): 1. Report to City Council, June 19, 2012, No. 12-080